

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 269364

15

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TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

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INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

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AMEMBASSY MEXICO

S E C R E T STATE 269364

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, GT, BH, UK, USUN

SUBJECT: BELIZE DISPUTE, AN UPDATE

1. AS A NUMBER OF AREA COUNTRIES ARE NOW INVOLVED IN THE DIPLOMATIC MANEUVERINGS OVER BELIZE, THE FOLLOWING IS PROVIDED FOR YOUR BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION.

2. THE GUATEMALAN-BRITISH DISPUTE OVER BELIZE ENTERED A DANGEROUS NEW PHASE DURING THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 3 AS THE BRITISH REINFORCED THEIR BELIZE GARRISON HEAVILY TO FORESTALL A POSSIBLE GUATEMALAN MOVE. BEGINNING NOVEMBER 5, THE BRITISH BEGAN TO BUILD UP THEIR 600-MAN GARRISON WITH AN ADDITIONAL 500-600 TROOPS, SIX

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 269364

HARRIER VTOL FIGHTER-BOMBERS, AND A FRIGATE. HMG

INFORMED US PRIVATELY THAT THIS ACTION WAS IN RESPONSE TO RECENT TRANSFERS OF GUATEMALAN TROOPS AND ARMORED VEHICLES CLOSER TO THE BELIZEAN BORDER, AND ALSO TO BELLICOSE STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT LAUGERUD AND OTHERS. THE GOG DENOUNCED THE BRITISH MOVE AS AN AGGRESSION, AND ON NOVEMBER 9 NOTIFIED THE OAS IT MAY WISH TO INVOKE THE RIO TREATY AT SOME FUTURE DATE. HOWEVER, THE GOG DOES NOT SEEM TO BE CONTEMPLATING AN IMMEDIATE MILITARY RESPONSE.

3. ATTENTION AND ANXIETY CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON THE UN'S FOURTH COMMITTEE (TRUSTEESHIP AFFAIRS), WHERE THREE RESOLUTIONS ON BELIZE ARE BEING CONSIDERED FOR ACTION THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 17. THE UK/CARIBBEAN-SPONSORED VERSION NOW HAS 55 CO-SPONSORS AND IS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN TO BE APPROVED BY THE UNGA, AGAINST A COMPETING GUATEMALAN RESOLUTION AND A QUOTE COMPROMISE UNQUOTE VERSION NEWLY INTRODUCED BY MEXICO. THE GOG HAS WARNED US REPEATEDLY THAT APPROVAL OF THE UK RESOLUTION, WITHOUT ANY SORT OF MOLLIFYING GESTURE BY THE BRITISH, WILL FORCE THEM INTO A MILITARY ADVENTURE WHICH THEY ADMIT WILL BE DISASTROUS BUT WHICH THEY SAY WILL BE NECESSARY TO SALVAGE NATIONAL HONOR AND ASSUAGE THE ARMY'S LEADERSHIP.

4. WHILE ATTEMPTING TO AVOID ANY DIRECT ROLE IN MEDIATING THIS CRISIS, WE HAVE ADVISED BOTH HMG AND THE GOG TO REMAIN IN CONTACT AND TO AVOID MIS-CALCULATIONS WHICH COULD SPARK AN ARMED CONFLICT. SECRETARY KISSINGER WARNED FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN ON NOVEMBER 5 THAT WE CONSIDER THE THREAT OF A CLASH VERY REAL, AND URGED HIM TO CONSIDER A NUMBER OF POSSIBLE NEGOTIATING OPTIONS. THESE INCLUDED SUBMISSION OF THE MATTER TO THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE AND NEGOTIATION OF JOINT SECURITY AND ECONOMIC ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN BELIZE AND GUATEMALA. THE BRITISH HAVE NOW INDICATED THEY WILL BE TALKING TO THE GOG PRIOR TO A UN VOTE AND WILL INDICATE THEIR WILLINGNESS TO RE-OPEN BILATERAL TALKS FOLLOWING THE UNGA SESSION. WHETHER THEIR NEGOTIATING PACKAGE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 269364

WILL SERVE TO DEFUSE THIS NAGGING CRISIS, HOWEVER, REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

5. THE MEXICANS ASKED FOR OUR ACTIVE SUPPORT IN LOBBYING FOR THEIR DRAFT. AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION WE DECLINED, BELIEVING IT PREFERABLE THAT WE NOT IDENTIFY OURSELVES WITH ANY PARTICULAR RESOLUTION AT THIS TIME. THE MEXICAN RESOLUTION IS RATHER CLOSER TO THE GUATEMALAN POSITION

AND THUS WILL HAVE CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY IN PERSUADING
THE 55 CO-SPONSORS OF THE UK/BELIZE DRAFT TO BACK AWAY
FROM ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR BELIZEAN INDEPENDENCE. WE HAVE
DECIDED TO ABSTAIN ON THE GUATEMALAN AND UK/BELIZE
DRAFTS IN ORDER TO PRESERVE OUR POSITION AS A FRIEND AND
COUNSELOR OF MODERATION TO BOTH SIDES. WE ARE CONTINUING
TO PRESS FOR A RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS. KISSINGER

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